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"De Insulis Inventis
Epistola Cristoferi Colom.
de Insulis in mari Indico..

1493

Facsimile 1900

Letter of Christopher Columbus,

the great benefactor of the present age, concerning the newly discovered islands of India upon the Ganges, upon which enterprise he was despatched eight months since by the invincible Sovereigns of Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella; directed to Don Rafael Sanchez, Treasurer of their most Serene Highnesses. Translated from the Spanish into Latin by Leandro de Cosco, April 25, 1493, first year of the pontificate of Alexander VI.

facsimile Reprint of the original Edition, with an English translation appended.

Albany, N. Y.
Joseph Mc Donough
1900



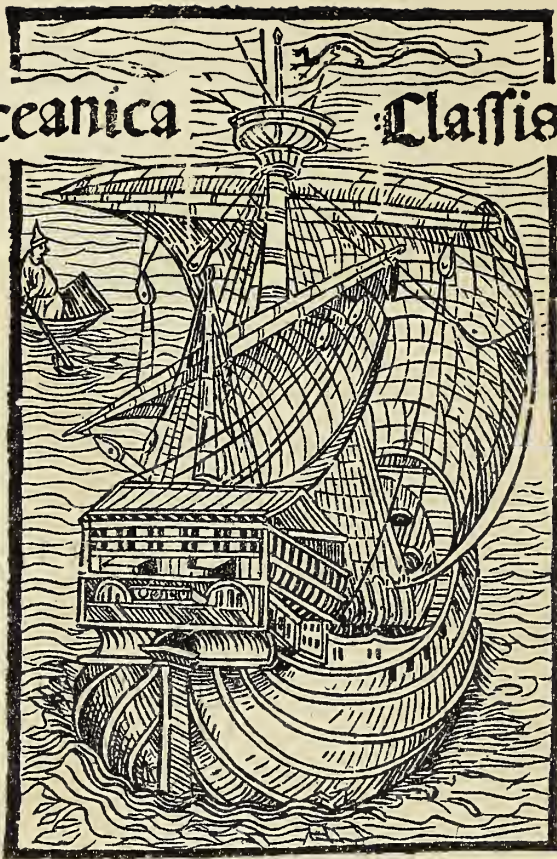
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Regnū hispanie.



Oceanica Classis



De Insulis inuentis

Epistola Cristoferi Colom (cui etas nostra multū debet : de Insulis in mari Indico nup inuētis. Ad quas perquirendas octauo antea mense: auspicijs et ere Inuictissimi Fernandi Hispaniarum Regis missus fuerat) ad Magnificum dñm Raphaelez Sanctis: eiusdē serenissimi Regis Thesaurariū missa. quam nobilis ac litterat⁹ vir Aliander de Cosco: ab Hispano ydeomate in latinū conuertit: tercio kl's Maij. M. cccc. xcij. Pontificatus Alexandri Sexti Anno Primo.

Glariam susceptę prouintie rem pfectam me psecutum fuisse: gratū tibi fore scio: has pstitui exarare: que te vnius cuiusq; rei in hoc nostro itinere geste inuenteq; admoneāt. Tricesimo tertio die postq; Gadibus discessi: in mare Indicū perueni: vbi plurimas Insulas innumeris habitatas hominib⁹ reperi: quarū oim p felicissimo Rege nostro: preconio celebrato ⁊ vexillis extensis: cōtradicante nemine possessionē accepi. primeq; earum: diui Saluatoris nomen imposui (cuius fret⁹ auxilio) tam ad hęc q; ad ceteras alias puenim⁹. Eam vero Indi



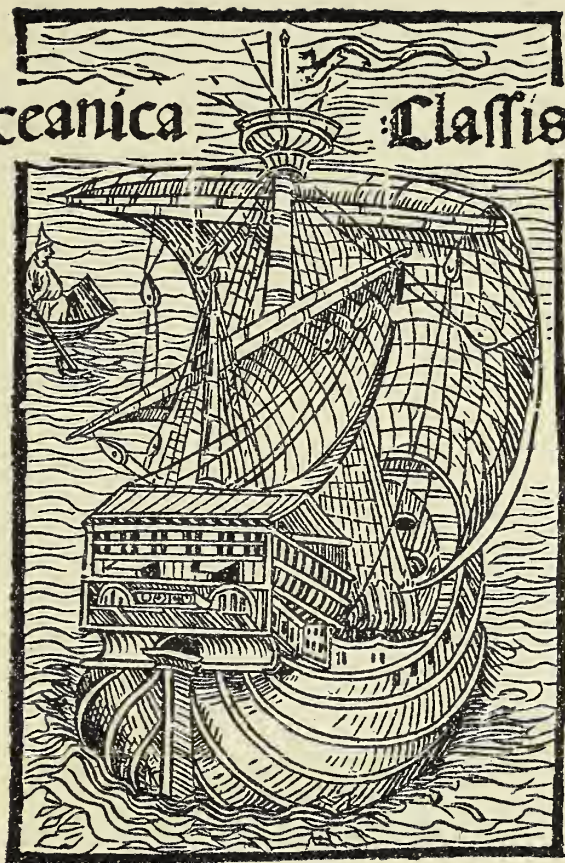
Euandhanyn vocant. Aliaz etiã vnã quanq̃
nouo nomine nuncupauī. Quippe aliam Insu-
lam Sancte Marie Cōceptiōis. aliam Fernã-
dinam. aliaz Ihsabellam. aliã Iohanam. ⁊ sic
de reliquis appellari iussi. Quãprimũ i eã In-
sulam quã dudũ Iohanam vocari dixi appuli-
mus: iuxta ei⁹ littus occidentẽ versus aliquã-
tulum processi: tamq̃ eam magnã nullo reper-
to sine inueni: vt non insulam: sed cõtinentem
Chataꝝ prouinciã esse crediderim: nulla tamẽ
vidẽs oppida municipiaue in maritimis sita cõ-
finibus: p̃ter aliquos vicos ⁊ p̃edia rustica:
cum quorũ incolis loqui nequibam: quare si-
mul ac nos videbant surripiebãt fugam. Pro-
gredebam vltra: existimans aliquam me vrbẽ
villasue inuenturum. Deniq̃ videns q̃ longe
admodum p̃gressis: nihil noui emergebat: et
huiusmodi via nos ad Septentrionem defere-
bat: q̃ ipse fugere exoptabam: terris etenim re-
gnabat bruma: ad austrumq̃ erat in voto cõs-
tendere: nec minus venti flagitantibus succe-
debãt. cõstitui alios nõ operiri successus: et sic
retrocedens ad portum quendam quem signa-
ueram sum reuersus: vnde duos hoies ex no-
stris in terram misi. qui inuestigarent: esset ne
Rex in ea prouincia/ vrbesue alique. hũ per



tres dies ambularūt inuenerūtq̄ innumeros
populos ⁊ habitatōēs: paruas tñ et absq̄ vllō
regimine: quapropt̄ redierūt. Interea ego iā
intellerā a q̄busdam Indis: quos ibidē sus-
ceperā: quō hmōi prouincia: insula quidem
erat. ⁊ sic perrexi orientē versus: ei⁹ semp̄ strin-
gens littoza vsq̄ ad miliaria .cccxxij. vbi ipsi⁹
insule sunt extrema. hinc aliā insulā ad orien-
tem prospexi: distantem ab hac Johana milia-
ribus. liiij. quā protinus Hispanam dixi: in eā-
q̄ cōcessi: ⁊ dixi iter quasi p̄ Septentrionez
quē admodū in Johana ad orientem: miliaria
dxxiij. que dicta Johana ⁊ alie ibidem insule
q̄ fertilissime existunt. hec multis atq̄ tutissi-
mis ⁊ latis: nec alijs quos vnq̄ viderim cōpa-
randis portib⁹: est circū data. multi maximi ⁊
salubres hanc interfluūt fluij. multi quoq̄ et
eminētissimi in ea sunt montes. Omnes be insu-
le sunt pulcerrime ⁊ varijs distincte figuris: p̄-
uie: ⁊ maxima arborū varietate sidera lamben-
tiū plene: q̄s nūq̄ folijs priuari credo: quip-
pe vidi eas ita virētes atq̄ decoras: ceu mēse
Ahaio i hispania solēt eē: q̄ ⁊ alie florētes: alie
fructuose: alie i alio statu: fm̄ vnus cuiusq̄ q̄li-
tatē vigebāt: garriebat philomena: ⁊ alij passe-
res varij ac innumeri: mēse Nouēbris q̄ ip̄e per
eas deambulabā. Sunt p̄terea in dicta insula
ij

Jobana septē vel octo palmarū genera: q̄ p̄ce-
ritate ⁊ pulchritudine (quēadmodū cetere oēs
arbores/herbe/fructuosas) n̄as facile exuperāt
Sūt ⁊ mirabiles pin⁹/agri/⁊ prata vastissima/
varie aues/varie mella/variaq; metalla:ferro
excepto. In ea autē quā Hispanā supra dixim⁹
nūcupari: maximi sunt mōtes ac pulcri:vasta
rura/nemora/campi feracissimi/ferri/pacisq; ⁊
cōdendis edificijs aptissimi. Portuū in hac in-
sula cōmoditas: ⁊ p̄stantia fluminū copia salu-
bitate admixta hoīm:q̄ nisi quis viderit: cre-
dulitatē supat. Huius arbores pascua ⁊ fruct⁹
multum ab illis Jobane differūt. Hec p̄terea
Hispana diuerso aromatis genere/auro/me-
tallisq; abundat. cui⁹ quidē ⁊ oīm aliarū quas
ego vidi: ⁊ quarū cognitionē habeo:īcole vtri-
usq; sexus nudi semp̄ incedūt: quēadmodum
edunt in lucem. preter aliquas feminas. q̄ fo-
lio frondeue aliq; aut bomicino velo: pudē-
da operiūt: qd̄ ip̄e sibi ad id negocij parāt. Ca-
rent hi om̄es (vt supra dixi) quocunq; genere
ferri. carent ⁊ armis: vtpote sibi ignotis nec ad
ea sūt apti. nō p̄p̄t corp̄is deformitatē (cū sint
bñ formati) s; qz sūt timidi ac pleni formidine.
gestāt tñ p̄ armis arūdines sole p̄stas: ī quarū
radicib⁹ hastile q̄ddā lignēū siccū ⁊ in mucro-
nē attenuatū figūt: neq; his audēt iugit̄ vti. nā

Oceanica Classis



sepe euenit cū miserim duos vel tris homines
ex meis ad aliquas villas: vt cū eaz loquerē-
tur incolis: exiisse agmē glomeratū ex Indis:
et vbi nostros appropinquare videbāt: fugam
celeriter arripuisse: despretis a patre liberis ⁊
ecōtra. ⁊ hoc nō q̄ cuipiam eozū damnū aliq̄d
vel iniuria illata fuerit: immo ad quoscūq; ap-
puli ⁊ q̄bus cū verbū facere potui: quicq̄d ha-
bebā sum elargit⁹: pannū aliaq; p̄ multa: nulla
mibi facta versura: sed sunt natura pauidi ac
timidi. Letez vbi se cernūt tutos: omī metu re-
pulsio: sunt ad modū simplices ac bone fidei: ⁊
in omībus que habent liberalissimi: roganti q̄
possidet inficiat nemo: quin ipsi nos ad id po-
scendum inuitāt. Maximū erga oēs amorē p̄-
seferūt: dāt queq; magna p̄ paruis. minima lz
re nībiloue ptenti: ego attē phibui ne tam mi-
nima ⁊ nulli⁹ p̄cij hisce darent: vt sunt lancis/
parapsidii / vitriq; fragmēta / jtez clauī / ligule /
quanq; si hoc poterāt adipisci: videbat eis pul-
cerrima mūdi possidere iocalia. Accidit enim
quēdam nauitā: tantū auri pondus habuisse
p̄ vna ligula: quāti sūt tres aurei solidi: ⁊ sic
alios p̄ alijs mīoris p̄cij: p̄stīm p̄ blanquis no-
uis: ⁊ q̄busdā nūmis aurcis: p̄ q̄b⁹ habēdis da-
bāt q̄cqd̄ petebat vēditoz: puta vnciā cū dimi-
diā ⁊ duas auri: vl̄ trigīta ⁊ q̄ dragīta bombic

pondo: quā ipi iā nouerāt. Itē arcuum/ampho
re/hydrie/dolijq̄ fragmēta: bombicez auro tā
q̄ bestie cōparabāt. qđ quia iniquū sane erat:
vetui: dedi q̄ eis multa pulcra z grata q̄ mecū
tulerā nullo iterueniēte p̄mio: vt eos mihi fa-
cili⁹ p̄ciliarē: fierēt q̄ xp̄icole: z vt sint p̄zoni in
amorē erga Regē Reginā principesq̄ nostros
et vniuersas gētes Hispanie: ac studeāt p̄gre-
re z coaceruare: ea q̄ nobis tradere q̄b⁹ ipi af-
fluūt z nos magnopē idigem⁹. Nullā hij nozūt
ydolatriā: Imo firmissime credūt oēz vim: oēz
potētīā: oīa deniq̄ bona esse ī celo: meq̄ inde
cū his nauib⁹ z nautis descēdisse: atz b̄ aīo vbi
fui susceptus post q̄ metū repulerāt. Nec sunt
segnes aut rudes: quin summi ac p̄spicacis in-
genij: z hoīes qui transfretāt mare illd: nō sine
admiratiōe vniuscuiusq̄ rei rationē reddunt:
sed nū q̄ viderunt gentes vestitas: neq̄ naues
hmōi Ego statim atq̄ ad mare illd pueni: e p̄ri-
ma insula quosdā Indos violenter arripui: q̄
ediscerēt a nobis: z nos p̄iter docerent ea: q̄ p̄
ipsi in hisce partibus cognitionē habebant. et
ex voto successit: nā breui nos ipos: z hij nos:
tum gestu ac signis: tum verbis intellexerunt.
magnq̄ nobis fuere emolumēto. veniunt mō
mecū tñ qui semp̄ putant me desiluisse e celo
q̄uis diu nobiscū versati fuerint hodieq̄ ver-

senf. ⁊ hi erant pzimi: q̄ id quocūq; appellaba-
mus nunciabāt: alij deinceps alijs elata voce
dicētes. Venite venite ⁊ videbitis gētes ethe-
reas. Quāobrē tā femie q̄ viri: tā impuberes
q̄ adulti: tam iuuenes q̄ senes: s̄posita forni-
dine paulo ante p̄cepta: nos certatim v̄sebāt
magna iter stipāte caterua alijs cibū/ alijs po-
tum afferentib⁹: max̄io cū amore ac beniuolē-
tia incredibili. Habz vna queq; insula multas
scaphas solidi ligni: ⁊ si angustas: longitudine
tñ ac forma nostris biremib⁹ similes: cursu aut
velociores. Regunt remis tantūmodo. Harū
quedā sunt magne: quedā parue: quedā ī me-
dio p̄sistunt. Plures tamē biremi que remigēt
duodeviginti transtris maiores: cū qb⁹ in oēs
illas insulas: que innumere sunt: traſſicūt. cūq;
his suā mercaturā exercēt: et inter eos comer-
ita fiunt. Aliquas ego harū biremium seu sca-
pharū: vidi q̄ vehebāt septuaginta ⁊ octuagin-
ta remiges. In omnib⁹ his insulis nulla est di-
uersitas inter gentis effigies. nulla in moribus
atq; loquela: quin oēs se intelligūt aduulcē:
que res putilis est ad id qđ serenissimū Regē
nostrū exoptare precipue reor: scz eorū ad san-
ctam xp̄i fidem p̄uersionē. cui quidē quantum
itelligere potui facilimi sunt ⁊ p̄ni. Dixi quē-

admodū sum pgressus antea insulā Johanz
p rectū tramitez occasus in orientem miliaria
cccxxij. sm quā viā ⁊ intuallū itineris possum
dicere hāc Johana esse maiorē Angliā ⁊ Scu
tia sll: nanqz vltra dicta. cccxxij. passulū milia:
in ea pte q̄ ad occidentē pspectat : due : quas
non petij : sup sunt puincie : quaz alterā Indi
Anan vocāt : cui⁹ accolē caudati nascunt. Tē
dunt in longitudinem ad miliaria. cxxx. vt ab
his q̄s vebo mecū Indis pcepi : qui om̄s has
callēt insulas. Hispanē vero ambit⁹ maior est
tota Hispania a cologna vsqz ad fontē rabiidū
hincqz facile arguit q̄ quartū ei⁹ lat⁹ qd̄ ip̄e
p rectā lineā occidentis in orientē traieci : mili
aria p̄tinet. dxi. Hec insula ē affectāda ⁊ affe
ctata nō spernēda in qua ⁊ si aliāz oīm vt dixi
p inuictissimo Rege n̄ro solenniter possessio
nem accepi : earūqz imperiū dicto Regi peni
tus cōmittit : i oportuniōri tñ loco : atqz oīm lu
cro ⁊ cōmertio p̄decenti : cuiusdā magneville :
cui Natiuitatis dñi nomē dedim⁹ : possessionē
peculiariter accepi. ibiqz arcem quandaz eri
gere extemplo iussi : que modo iam debet esse
pacta : in qua hoīes qui necessarij sunt viſi : cū
oīm armoz genere : ⁊ vltra annū victu oportu
no reliq̄. Itē quādā carauellā : ⁊ p alijs p̄struē
bis tā ī hac arte q̄ in ceteri peritos : ac eiusdē



insule Regis erga nos beniuolentiã ⁊ familia-
ritatē incredibilē. Sūt em̄ gētēs ille amabiles
admodū ⁊ benigne: eo q̄ Rex p̄dictus me fra-
trem suum dici gloriabatur. Et si animū reuoca-
rent: ⁊ his q̄ ī arce manserūt nocere uelint: ne-
queūt: quia armis carēt: nudi īcedūt: ⁊ nimitū
timidi. ideo dictā arcem tenētes: dū taxat p̄nt
totā eā insulā nullo sibi imminente discrimine
(dūmodo leges quas dedim⁹ ac regimē nō ex-
cedāt) facile detinere. In om̄ib⁹ his insulis ut
intellexi: quisq̄ vni tm̄ p̄iugi acquiescit: p̄ter
principes aut reges: q̄bus viginti habere licet.
Femine magis q̄ viri laborare vident: nec be-
ne potui intelligere an habeāt bona ppria: vi-
di em̄ qd̄ vn⁹ habebat alijs īpartiri: p̄ftim da-
pes / obsonia / ⁊ hmōi. Nullū ap̄d eos monstꝝ
reperi: ut pleriq̄ existimabant: sed hoīes ma-
gne reuerētie atq̄ benignos. Nec sunt nigri ve-
lut ethiopes. habēt crines planos ac demissos
nō degunt vbi radiorū solaris emicat calor. p̄
magna nāq̄ hic est solis vehementia: p̄pterea
q̄ ab æquinoctiali linea distat. vbi videtur / gra-
dus sex ⁊ viginti Ex montiū cacuminib⁹ ma-
ximū q̄ viget frig⁹: s̄ id q̄dem modetant̄ In-
di: tū loci psuetudie: tū rex calidissimaz q̄b⁹
frequēter ⁊ luxuriose vescunt̄ presidio. Itaq̄
mōstra aliq̄ nō vidi: neq̄ eorū alicubi habui co-

gnitionem: excepta quadaz insula Charis nū-
cupata: que secunda ex Hispana in Indiam
transfretatibus existit. quam gens quedam a
finitimis habitata ferocior incolit. hi carne hu-
mana vescunt. Habent predicti biremiū gene-
ra plurima: quibus in omnes Indicas insulas
traijciunt/depredāt/surripiūt q̄ quecūq̄ p̄nt.
Nihil ab alijs differunt nisi q̄ gerunt more fe-
mineo longos crines. vtunt arcub⁹ et sp̄culis
arundineis: fixis (vt dixim⁹) in grossiori pte at
tenuatis hastilib⁹. ideoq̄ habēt feroces: qua-
re ceteri Indi inexhausto metu plectuntur: s̄
hos ego nihili facio plus q̄ alios. Hi sunt qui
coeunt cum quibusdam feminis: que sole insu-
lam Athateunin primā ex Hispana in Indiam
traijcientib⁹ habitant. He autē femine nulluz
sui sexus opus exercent: vtunt em̄ arcub⁹ ⁊ spi-
cul⁹ sicuti d̄ eaz iugib⁹ dixi muniūt: sese lami-
nis eneis q̄z maxia apd eas copia existit. Ali-
am mib⁹ insulā affirmant supradicta Hispana
maiorē: ei⁹ incole carēt pilis. auroq̄ inf alias
potissimū exuberat. Hui⁹ insule ⁊ aliax q̄s vi-
di hoies mecū porto: q̄ hoz q̄ dixi testimoniū
phibēt. Deniq̄ vt nfi discessus et celeris reuer-
siois cōpēdiū: ac emolumētū breuib⁹ astringā
h̄ polliceoz: me nris Regib⁹ inuictissimis puo-
eoz fultū auxilio: tantū auri datuz quantum

eis fuerit opus. tm̄ v̄ro aromatuz. bombicis.
mastice (q̄ apud Chium dūtaxat inuenit) tan
tūq; ligni aloes. tantum fuoz hydrophilato
rum: quantū eozū maiestas voluerit exigere.
item reubarbarū talia aromatuz genera: q̄ hi
quos in dicta arce reliqui iā inuenisse: atq; in
uenturos existimo. q̄ siquidem ego nullibi ma
gis sum moratus nisi quantū me coegerūt v̄ē
ti: preterq; in villa Natiuitatis: dū arcem con
dere et tuta om̄ia esse prouidi. Que et si maxia
et inaudita sunt: multo tamē maiora forent si
naues mihi vt ratio exigit subuenissent. Vex
multū ac mirabile hoc: nec nostris meritis cor
respondēs: sed sancte Christiane fidei: nostro
rumq; Regū pietati ac religioni: quia qd̄ hu
manus cōsequi nō poterat intellectus: id hūa
nis concessit diuinus. Solet em̄ deus suos su
os: quiq; sua p̄cepta diligūt: etiā i impossibili
bus exaudire: vt nobis i p̄ntia ptigit: q̄ ea p̄se
cuti sum⁹: q̄ hacten⁹ mortaliū vires mime atti
gerāt. nā si hax insularū q̄piā aliqd̄ sc̄pserit aut
locuti sūt: oēs p̄ambages et piecturas nemo se
eas vidisse asserit: vñ p̄pe videbat̄ fabula. Igi
tur Rex et Regia p̄ncipes ac eoz regna felicis
sima: cū teq; alie Christianoz puincie Salua
tori dño n̄ro Iesu xp̄o agam⁹ gr̄as: q̄ tāta nos
victoria munereq; donauit: celebrēt p̄cessiōes

peragant solennia sacra. festaq; fronde velent
delubra. Exultet *Chriftus* i terris: quæ admodum
in celis exultat: cum tot populorum p̄ditas añ
hac animas saluatum iri p̄euldet. Letemur ⁊
nos: tū p̄pter exaltationē nostre fidei. tum p̄-
pter rerū temporalium incremēta: quoz nō solū
Hispania sed vniuersa *Christianitas* est futu-
ra p̄ticeps. Hec vt gesta sunt sic breuiter enar-
rata. Vale. *Elisbone* pridie ydus *Marcij*.

Cristoforo Colom *Oceane classis Prefectus*.

Epigrama. *R. L. de Corbaria* Episcopi
Montispalusij
Ad Inuictissimū Regē *Hispaniarū*

Jam nulla *Hispanis* tellus addēda triūphis:
Atq; parum tantis virib⁹/orbis erat.
Nunc longe *Lois* regio deprensā sub yndis.
Auctura est titulos *Betice* magnē tuos.
Unde repertori incrito referenda *Colūbo*
Gratia: s; summo est maior habēda deo:
Qui vincēda parat noua regna tibiq; sibiq;
Teq; simul fortem prestat ⁊ esse pium.

Fernād^o rex hispania



Granata:



TRANSLATION.

*LETTER OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS,
the great benefactor of the present age, con-
cerning the newly discovered islands of India
upon the Ganges, upon which enterprise he
was despatched eight months since by the in-
vincible Sovereigns of Spain, Ferdinand and
Isabella; directed to Don Rafael Sanchez,
Treasurer of their most Serene Highnesses.
Translated from the Spanish into Latin by
Leandro de Cosco, April 25, 1493, first year
of the pontificate of Alexander VI.*

As I know you will take pleasure in hearing of the success of my undertaking, I have determined to send you an account of the occurrences of my voyage and discoveries. Thirty-three days after my departure from Cadiz I arrived in the sea of India, where I discovered many islands, inhabited by innumerable people. Of these I took posses-

sion in the name of our fortunate monarch, with public proclamation and colors flying, no one offering any resistance. I named the first of these islands San Salvador, thus bestowing upon it the name of our holy Saviour, under whose protection I made the discovery. The Indians call it Guahanahyn. I gave also a new name to the others, calling the second Santa Maria de la Concepcion, the third Fernandina, the fourth Isabella, the fifth Juana. In the same manner I named the rest. Arriving at the one last mentioned, I sailed along the coast toward the West, discovering so great an extent of land that I could not imagine it to be an island, but the continent of Cathay. I did not, however, discover upon the coast any large cities, all we saw being a few villages and farms, with the inhabitants of which we could not obtain any communication, they all flying at our approach. I continued my course, still expecting to meet with some town or city, but after having gone a great distance, and not meeting with any, and finding myself proceeding toward the North, which I was desirous to avoid on account of the cold, and, moreover, meeting with a contrary wind, I determined to return to the South, and, therefore, put

about and sailed back to a harbour which I had before observed.

At this place I sent two men into the country to see if the king or any cities were to be found. These returned in three days, having discovered a great number of towns, but all of them small, and without any government. In the meantime I had learned from certain Indians whom I had taken here that this country was an island. I returned along the coast to the east, a distance of three hundred and twenty-two miles, which brought me to the extremity of the island. Here I discovered to the East another island, fifty-four miles from Juana. I gave it the name of Espanola, and coasted along the island to the North as at Juana I had proceeded to the East, a distance of five hundred and sixty-four miles. All these islands are very fertile. That of Juana abounds in safe and capacious harbours, which surpass in excellence all I have ever seen elsewhere. It is watered by a great number of large and pleasant rivers, and contains many high mountains.

These islands are of a beautiful appearance, and present a great diversity of views. They may be traversed in any part, and are adorned with a

great variety of exceedingly lofty trees, which to appearance never lose their foliage, for I saw them as verdant and flourishing as they exist in Spain in the month of May, some covered with flowers, others loaded with fruit, according to their different species and their season of bearing, the whole offering a spectacle of great beauty. The nightingale and countless other birds were singing, although it was the month of November when I visited this delightful region. There are, in the island of Juana, six or eight sorts of palm trees, superior to those of our land in height and beauty, and this superiority is likewise observable in the other trees as well as in the herbs and fruits. Here are to be seen the most beautiful pine trees and the most extensive fields and pastures, a great variety of birds, several sorts of honey, and many kinds of metal, with the exception of iron. In the island named Espanola there are lofty and beautiful mountains, large cultivated tracts, woods, fertile fields, and everything adapted to the purposes of agriculture, the pasturage of cattle, and the erection of houses. The excellence of the harbours here, and the abundance of the streams which contribute to the salubrity of the climate,

exceed imagination. There is a considerable difference between the trees, fruits, and fields of this island and those of Juana, but here are found divers sorts of precious drugs, gold, and metals. The inhabitants of both sexes, in Espanola, and all the other islands which I saw or heard of, go naked as they were born, all except a few females who wear at the waist a green leaf, a portion of cotton, or bit of silk, which they manufacture for this purpose.

As I before remarked, they possess no iron, and they neither use nor are acquainted with weapons, to the exercise of which indeed they are not at all adapted, not by reason of any corporal deficiency, as they are very well shaped, but on account of their great timidity. Instead of arms they have canes dried in the sun, to the largest ends of which they fix a piece of wood sharpened at the end; of these, however, they have not the courage to make much use. I have in many instances sent two or three of my men to their towns to communicate with the inhabitants, when the Indians would tumultuously rush out, and seeing our people drawing near, run away with such haste that the father would abandon

his child and the child his father. This timidity was not owing to any violence or injury we offered them, as I was in the practice of making presents of cloth and other things to all the natives whom I met, but arose from their natural mildness and want of courage. Notwithstanding this, as soon as they have thrown aside their fear, and consider themselves in safety, they are very ingenuous and honest, and display great liberality with whatever they possess.

They never refuse to give any thing away which is demanded of them, and will even themselves entreat an acceptance of their property. They exhibit a great friendship towards every one, and will give whatever they have for a trifle or nothing at all. I forbade my men to purchase any thing of them with such worthless articles as bits of earthenware, fragments of platters, broken glass, nails, and thongs of leather, although when they got possession of any such thing they valued it as highly as the most precious jewel in the world. In this manner of bartering, a sailor has acquired for a leather strap or piece of rope, gold to the amount of three sueldos. Others have obtained as much for a matter of still lower value. For

new Spanish coins they would give any thing asked of them, as an ounce and a half or two ounces of gold, or thirty or forty pounds of cotton. Thus they would trade away their cotton and gold like idiots, for broken hoops, platters and glass. I prohibited their traffic on account of its injustice, and made them many presents of useful things which I had carried with me, for the purpose of gaining their affection, in order that they may receive the faith of Jesus Christ, be well disposed towards us, and be inclined to submit to the King and Queen, our Princes, and all the Spaniards, and furthermore that they may furnish us with the commodities which abound among them and we are in want of.

They are not idolators, but believe that all power and goodness is in heaven, and that I had proceeded from that place with my ships and men; under this notion they received me at my first arrival as soon as they had banished their fear. They are not stupid and indolent, but acute and sagacious. Those of them who navigate the seas among those islands give singular accounts of what they have observed upon their voyages, but have never seen people who wear clothes, nor

any ships similar to ours. On my arrival I took by force from the first island a few of the Indians, in order that we might become acquainted with one another's language, and to gain a knowledge of what their country contained. These were of singular use to us, as we came to understand each other in a short time by the help of words and signs. I have them still with me, and they continue in the belief that we come from heaven. This information they published wherever we arrived, exclaiming in a loud voice, "Come! come! and see the celestial people." Upon this call, the natives would come thronging to us, after having banished the fear which seized them at first, men, women and children, old and young, crowding the roads and bringing us victuals and drink, with the utmost affection and reverence.

In every one of these islands there are a great number of canoes, each one made of a solid log, of a narrow shape, somewhat resembling our fustas, but swifter in the water; they are navigated solely by oars. They are of different sizes, the most of them containing seats for eighteen rowers. Throughout these islands there is no diversity in the appearance of the people, their manners or

language, all the inhabitants understanding one another; a very favorable circumstance, in my opinion, to the design which I have no doubt is entertained by our king, namely, to convert them to the holy Christian faith, to which as far as I can perceive they are well disposed. I have said that I sailed from W. to E. three hundred and twenty-two miles along the island of Juana; from the length of this course I am confident that this island is larger than England and Scotland together, for besides the extent which I coasted there are two other provinces to the West which I did not survey. One of these is named by the Indians Anam, and contains inhabitants with tails. These tracts extend to the distance of a hundred and eighty miles, as I have learnt from the Indians with me, who are well acquainted with them.

The island of Espanola is as large as that part of Spain which extends from Catalonia to Fontarabia, which I infer from the extent of that side of it which I sailed along, being five hundred and forty miles in length. I took possession of this fine island, as I had done of the others, in the name of our invincible king; and fixed upon a spot for a large city here, as I judged it the most favorable

place. I called it Navidad, and ordered the construction of a fortress here, which is by this time finished. At this place I left a sufficient number of men, with all sorts of arms, and a sufficiency of provisions for above a year. I also left them a caravel and expert workmen, after having secured them the friendship of the king of this part of the country. The people are a friendly and amiable race, and the king took a pride in calling himself my brother. Even if their sentiments should change, and they should become hostile towards us, they will not be able to effect any injury to those who remain at the fortress, as they are destitute of weapons, go naked, and are very cowardly, so that those whom I have left there will be able to retain the whole island in subjection without any danger, if they adhere to the regulations with which I charged them.

Each of the natives, as far as I can understand, has one wife, with the exception of the King and Princes, who are permitted to have as many as twenty. The women appear to do more labour than the men. Whether there exists any such thing here as private property I have not been able to ascertain, as I have observed that an individual

has been set to distribute to the others, in particular, food and such things. I found no ferocious, sanguinary people in these parts, as some seem to have imagined the people here to be, but they are a very mild and friendly race. Their color is not black like that of the Ethiopians. Their hair is lank and hanging down. They do not inhabit those parts where the sun's rays are very powerful, as the heat is excessive here, the latitude being apparently twenty-six degrees. On the summits of the mountains the cold is great, but they do not suffer any incommmodity from it, by being accustomed to the climate, and by the use of hot meats and drinks, which they consume very prodigally.

People of a monstrous description I saw none nor heard of any, except those of the island named Caris, which is the second on the course from Espanola to India; this island is inhabited by people who are regarded by their neighbors as exceedingly ferocious; they feed upon human flesh. These people have many sorts of canoes, with which they make incursions upon all the isles of India, robbing and plundering wherever they go. Their difference from the others consists in their wearing long hair like that of the women, and

in using bows and arrows of cane, these last constructed, as I have already related, by fixing a piece of sharpened wood at the larger end. On this account they are deemed very ferocious by the other Indians, and are much feared by them; I think, however, these men are precisely like the others. These are the natives who go to visit the females, who are the sole inhabitants, of the island of Matenin, which is the first on the route from Espanola to India. These women exercise none of the common occupations of their sex, but manage the bow and dart, as we are told of the ancients. They wear armour made of plates of copper, of which metal they have great abundance.

I am assured by the Indians that there is another island, larger than Espanola, whose inhabitants are without hair, and who possess a greater quantity of gold than the others. From this island, as well as the others, I have taken some of the inhabitants to confirm the accounts which I give.

Finally, to sum up the whole, and state briefly the great profits of this voyage, I am enabled to promise the acquisition, by a trifling assistance from their Majesties, of any quantity of gold, drugs, cotton, and mastick, which last article is

found only in the island of Scio; also any quantity of aloe, and as many slaves for the service of the marine as their Majesties may stand in need of. The same may be said of rhubarb, and a great variety of other things, which, I have no doubt, will be discovered by those I have left at the fort, as I did not stop long at any single place, unless obliged to do so by the weather, with the exception of the city of Navidad, where we made some stay to build the fort and provide the necessary securities for the place.

Although the discoveries actually accomplished appear great and surprising, yet I should have effected much more had I been furnished with a proper fleet. Nevertheless, the great success of this enterprise is not to be ascribed to my own merits, but to the holy Catholic faith and the piety of our Sovereigns, the Lord often granting to men what they never imagine themselves capable of effecting, as he is accustomed to hear the prayers of his servants and those who love his commandments, even in that which appears impossible; in this manner has it happened to me, who have succeeded in an undertaking never before accomplished by man. For although some persons

have written or spoken of the existence of these islands, they have all rested their assertions upon conjecture, no one having ever affirmed that he saw them, on which account their existence has been deemed fabulous.

And now ought the King, Queen, Princes, and all their dominions, as well as the whole of Christendom, to give thanks to our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has granted us such a victory and great success. Let processions be ordered, let solemn festivals be celebrated, let the temples be filled with boughs and flowers. Let Christ rejoice upon earth as he does in heaven, to witness the coming salvation of so many people heretofore given over to perdition. Let us rejoice for the exaltation of our faith, as well as for the augmentation of our temporal prosperity, in which not only Spain, but all Christendom shall participate. Such are the events which I have described to you with brevity. Adieu.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS,

Admiral of the Armada of the Ocean.

LISBON, *March 14th.*

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